

PRELIMINARY REPORT TALL JALŪL 2009¹ AND 2010 SEASONS² FIELD G AND W

Paul and Helena Gregor

Since Field A, which is located on northeastern ridge of the tall, failed to produce any remains of city fortifications, the decision was made in 2007,³ to open a new Field (G) on southeastern ridge of the tall (see **Fig. 1**). After the first season of excavation in Field G it was evident that a stretch of the city wall was revealed with adja-



1. *Topographical map of Tall Jalul.*

cent building structures in its vicinity. Square G2 revealed, what appeared to be the southeastern corner of the city wall. However, it seemed that some sort of a channel was running along the inside of the southern wall. The nature and purpose of this channel was not known at that time, but it was evident that the wall and the channel next to it were not constructed at the same time. In addition to the channel and wall, several other architectural features were discovered in Square G4, located north of G2, while Squares G1 and G3 did not yield any architectural results. Discovery of a possible city wall prompted further excavations conducted in 2009 and 2010.

During the 2009 season work continued in Squares G2 and G4, where architectural remains were discovered, and a week after the season started work also resumed in Square G1. In addition to Squares G1-4, which were opened in 2007 season, Square G6 was opened east of G4, but was abandoned after a few days of excavation due to the fact that the eastern stretch of city wall was not found there. However, the area

1. The authors of this report would like to express their gratitude to volunteers and staff members who participated in this field. We would like to express our appreciation to our sponsoring institutions; Andrews University, Cincinnati Bible University and ACOR. Also, we would like to thank the Director-General of Antiquities, Fawwaz al-Kraysheh for the support the Department of Antiquities of Jordan provided this season for us. Finally, we appreciate the services of Mr Basem al-Mahamid and Mr Hussam Hjazin who served as representatives of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. The staff for this season included, director Randall Younker, co-director Connie Gane, field supervisor Paul Z. Gregor. Basem al-Mahamid did the architectural drawings. Square supervisors were Micah Johnson, Jeff Hudon, Chad Washburn, Michelle Berglin and Justin Singleton. Volunteers included Gary Achenbach, Stephen Allock, Denis Fortin, Erika Fortin, David Glazer, Eva Glazer, Sasa

Glazer, John Heczko, Young Kim, David Merling, Jeremy Merling, Kohl Merling, Nadine Plummer, Daniel Regal, Zenaida Salazar, Douglas Simmons, Victor Tenorio, Tine Vekemans, Frances Watkinson, Bob Wilkins and Florie Yang, and their contribution was much appreciated.

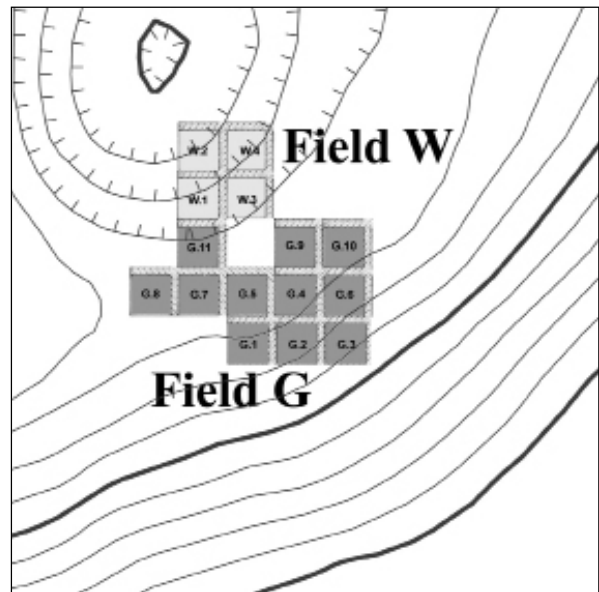
2. We express our gratitude to Hanadi Al-Taher who served during this season as representative of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. Staff for this season included director Randall Younker, co-director Paul Gregor, field supervisors Paul and Helena Gregor. Paul Ray did the architectural drawings. Square supervisors were Denis Fortin, Sabal Zaben, Jeff Hudon and Michelle Berglin. Volunteers included Amanda McGuire, Jacob Moody, Owen Chesnut, Medaliz Gutierrez, Joshua Heczko, John Heczko and Aaron Moushon, and their participation was much appreciated.

3. Staff for the 2007 season was provided by the Cincinnati Bible University led by Mark Ziese.

west of Square G4 seemed to be very promising so we opened Square G5 to better understand the function and purpose of the structures found in Square G4 during the previous season. Later, Squares G6-9 were opened to bring more light and understanding to the city wall remains.

Work resumed at the site during 2010 for only three weeks. The main goal this season was to follow the water channel and discover its route. For this purpose Square G11 north of G6 was opened. In addition, Square G10 was opened to reveal the continuation of the eastern stretch of the city wall. While the water channel continued in Square G11, Square G10 did not bring the desired results since no trace of the city wall was found in that square. Since the water channel seemed to lead toward what appears to be an ancient water reservoir, a new Field (W) was established just north of Square G11. Four squares were opened in Field W (W1-4) whose purpose was to reveal the continuation of the water channel (see Fig. 2).

Three seasons of excavation have revealed three major occupational phases. According to the preliminary pottery readings the city wall dates to the 9th century BC, a pillared building found in 2007 belongs to the 8th century B.C., while the water channel was erected and used sometime during the 7th century BC. There are also a few architectural remains dating to the

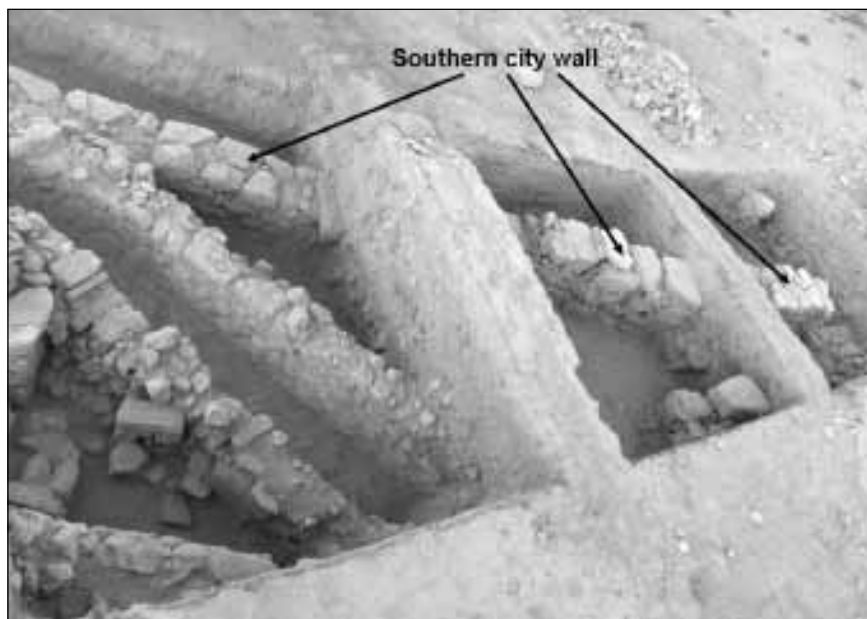


2. Fields G and W.

Persian period.

9th Century City Wall

After a number of seasons of excavations at Tall Jalūl, significant portion of the city wall has been found.⁴ During the 2007 season only few meters of its length were discovered in Field G, but during 2009 another 20 meters were exposed (see Fig. 3). The city wall, which belonged to a fortification system of ancient city, was found



3. Southern city wall.

4. Earlier, a fraction of the city wall was found in Field B.

at the southeastern corner of the tall. During the excavation, the foundation trenches of the walls were not found which leads to conclusion that ancient architects laid the first course of its stones on the existing surface. Through the time of its existence layers of silt were accumulated outside the wall with a significant amount of broken pottery sherds. Alongside the wall, a trench was dug to establish the date of its use and construction. In the trench, a few Early Bronze Age pottery sherds were found mixed with some Middle and Late Bronze Age material. However, the most frequent sherds date to Iron Age I and II. As excavation of the trench progressed, the surface, upon which the wall was constructed, was found and produced pottery sherds which date to Iron I with the exception of one or two sherds from Early Iron Age II. However, when the soil which was located under the first course of the wall was excavated only Iron Age I and Late Bronze Age material was unearthed. Since some sherds in immediate vicinity to the wall were dated to Early Iron Age II the wall was dated to 9th century BC.

The southern part of the city wall is 20 meters in length and connects to the eastern section of the wall at right angle. At that intersection the wall is preserved to a height of more than three meters. Both walls were approximately one meter wide and well constructed, with roughly-

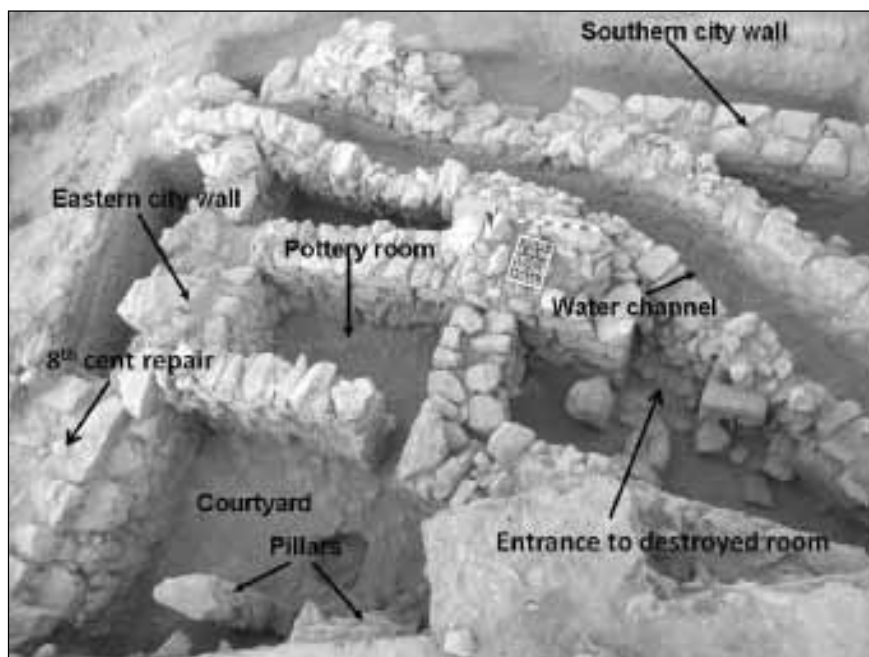
hewn medium-and-large-boulders, filled with chink stones. After 20 meters in length, the southern wall abruptly ends with what appears to be a tower which was upgraded and repaired at least one time, probably 8th century BC (see **Fig. 4**). Further excavations will hopefully reveal if this was indeed a tower, or yet another stretch of the wall. Also, the eastern wall appears to had been repaired at the same time (see **Fig. 5**). A number of sling stones, arrowheads and javelin points (see **Fig. 6**) were found inside and out of the city walls, indicating their destruction during the 7th century BC, probably by the Babylonian invasion in the region.

8th Century BC Pillared House

During the excavation in 2007, Square G4 was opened where several architectural features emerging, parallel to the southern city wall. Discovery of these structures prompted work in the same square the next season (2009), adding two new squares; G5 located west of G4, and a few weeks before season ended, G9, just north of G4. By the end of the season, a building was partially excavated, revealing several of its rooms and a courtyard with pillars (see **Fig. 5**). The building was located at southeastern corner of the tall, incorporating the city walls as part of the structure. Debris were carefully removed from a beaten earth floor, in the courtyard and separated



4. Possible tower.



5. Building.



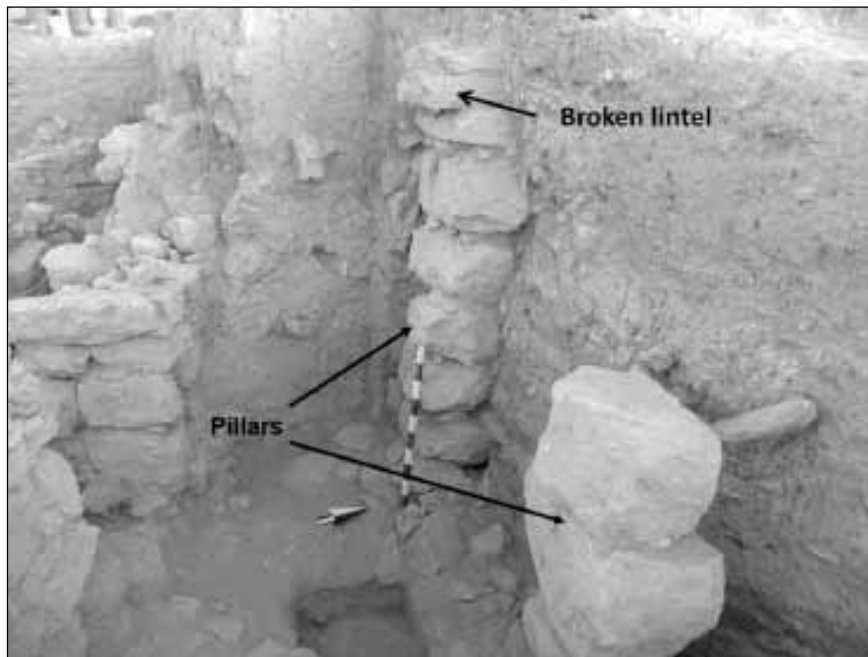
6. Arrow head.

in to several pails for dating. A preliminary pottery reading suggested that the building was destroyed, probably at the same time or little later than the city wall, during the end of the 7th century BC. A small probe was excavated in the floor of the courtyard, where only a few pottery sherds were found. A preliminary reading indicates that the building was constructed during earlier part of Iron Age II, probably in the 8th century BC.

The courtyard, with two pillars standing in the middle of it probably served as an open space for food preparation. The pillars are equally spaced, with a one meter distance between them and the eastern section of the city wall, which also served as the outer wall of the building. The space between the eastern pillar and eastern part of the wall was blocked with narrow brick wall, while the space between the pillars was open and served as an entrance to another possible room

(not excavated yet). Both pillars are constructed of medium and large boulders, placed on top of each other. The eastern pillar, which is closer to the city wall, was preserved to 1.5 meters, while the western counterpart is preserved to its entire height of 2.5 meters, with a broken lintel still in place (see **Fig. 7**).

In addition to the courtyard, the building consists of several adjacent rooms. One or two back rooms, south of the courtyard were destroyed by the water channel (see **Fig. 5**). The entrance to one of them is still visible in Square G5. However, only one small room was found intact. Its narrow walls (0.5 meters in width) were constructed of a single line of unhewn field stones and is preserved up to 1.5 meters in height. Its narrow entrance (0.5 meters in width) is located at the northwestern corner of the room. Its walls create a rectangular space 1.4 meters wide and 2.7 meters long. Toward the end of its usage, the room was used as a dumping place for damaged and unusable pots. The entire room was filled (up to 0.7 meters) with broken pots of different kinds. Mainly the assemblage consisted of domestic pots of everyday use. The room was void of storage jars and pithoi. Among the pots, various kinds of jars were found in addition to cooking pots, plates, lamps, pilgrim's flasks, jugs, juglets, and bowls of all sizes, even several large tripod bowls were present (see **Fig. 8**). All



7. Pillars.



8. Sample pottery found in small room.

pottery from the room dates to the Late Iron Age II, probably 7th century BC. Besides the pottery, several seal impressions and a plaque figurine were found (see **Fig. 9**).

Squares G5 and G9 also produced remnants that possibly belong to the same structure. While Square G5 revealed one face of a wall which is partially located in northern balk, Square G9 revealed a section of a structure which seems to belong to the same building.

Water Channel 7th Century BC

A water channel was discovered during the 2007 season, even though at that time its function was not obvious. This became apparent



9. Figurine head.

during 2009 and 2010 seasons. Preliminary pottery readings indicate that the channel was constructed during the 7th century BC, but not after the destruction of the city walls and pillared building. This conclusion is based on path of the channel and its exit outside the city wall. When the ancient architects constructed the channel they did not build it in a straight line from the water source to its exit, but carefully navigated the channel in such a way that the 8th century BC, building structure would be left intact as much as possible. The channel begins its course from the water source (see **Fig. 12**) moving toward southern wall in a straight line, but after 20 meters curving toward the east and exiting through the city wall at the corner where eastern and southern wall connect (see **Fig. 10**). Fur-

thermore, its architects destroyed a portion of eastern wall to accommodate the channel's exit outside the city walls (see **Fig. 11**). Interestingly, the elevation of the channel at both ends indicates that the highest point is where the channel connects to the water reservoir (806.44 above sea level) while the end which exits through the city walls is much lower (805.82 above sea level). This seems to indicate that its function was not to feed the reservoir but rather to empty the water from its source. It would appear that at times the water level in the reservoir was so high that the city dwellers ultimately had to get rid of excess water by building a channel to prevent flooding of the city streets.

To construct the channel the ancient architects carefully leveled the area where the channel would pass, laid down its foundation and then built its walls. Then, earth was brought into support the walls on the outside while both the floor and its inside walls were plastered. The channel found in Squares G2, G5, G11, W1, W3 and W4, is 0.5 meters wide throughout its excavated length of 33.5 meters. It is well preserved except for one side of the wall in the middle of the channel, whose ends were partially de-



10. Section of water channel.



11. Cut through eastern city wall



12. Possible Beginning of water channel.

stroyed in antiquity by stone robbers. The walls are 1.5 meters in height, indicating that the volume of the water being led through it was likely considerable.

In addition to the three occupational phases mentioned above, there were some unimpressive remnants of Persian occupation, consisting of wall fragments, floors and pavements found in Squares G10, G11, and W4. Each occupational phase was followed by an abandonment phase, evident by earth fills and pits. It is also interesting to note that around the city walls horse bones were present, while closer to water reservoir there were scattered donkey bones. Again the most common bones were of sheep and goats, indicating a nomadic or semi-nomadic flavor of ancient society at this particular time.

Paul Gregor
Helena Gregor
Andrews University